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RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY PRIORITY 3633
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 2263
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 4662
RUEHHE/AMEMBASSY HELSINKI 0908
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1439
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 000143

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SUBJECT: PAPUA -- NEW EXILE GROUP TRIES TO GAIN TRACTION

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Classified By: Pol/C Joseph Legend Novak, reasons 1.4 (b+d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: A new group of self-described Papuan exiles has told us it seeks to open negotiations with Jakarta over the province's legal status. The group's focus on "self-determination" basically makes their efforts a non-starter with the GOI. Moreover, the exiles' almost exclusive focus on Papua's legal status highlights a growing rift with activists inside Papua, who are considerably more moderate. That said, the exiles remain a factor and clearly maintain some residual support in Papua. END SUMMARY.

THE USUAL SUSPECTS?

12. (SBU) There is a new organization on the scene pressing Papua-related issues. Self-described Papuan exile groups have formed a new umbrella organization called the West Papua National Coalition for Liberation (WPNCCL). The WPNCCL's purpose is to press Jakarta into negotiations over Papua's legal and political status. The group claims to include all the major groups that support Papuan independence, including the Free Papua Movement (OPM), the National Liberation Forces of West Papua (TPN-PB) and the Papua Presidium Council. Papuan student groups are also part of the WPNCCL, while non-Papuan supporter groups--such as ELSHAM Australia--have observer status.

13. (C) Australia-based WPNCCL spokesperson Paula Makabory asserted to poloff in a recent telephone conversation that numerous Papuans within Indonesia supported the coalition. She added, however, that she could not provide more details out of "fear" for their safety. Makabory also emphasized that the WPNCCL would pursue its goals through peaceful means and did not support any violent actions in support of Papuan "self-determination" (usually a code word used by anti-Indonesian Papuans to mean independence).

FAMILIAR GRIEVANCES

14. (C) The new group's grievances are not new. The WPNCCL's approach basically rests on the claim that Indonesia illegally absorbed Papua (then Dutch New Guinea) through the 1969 UN-supervised Act of Free Choice. As a remedy, they

propose internationally mediated negotiations with Indonesia over Papua's socio-political status. This, they hope, will lead to some mechanism wherein Papuans would express their will regarding the province's future. Given that opportunity, a majority of Papuans would choose independence, Makabory claimed. She also argued that since the WPNCL represented "all Papuans" it was "the only voice" which could engage Jakarta on behalf of the Papuans.

15. (C) WPNCL statements also regurgitate many of the dramatic but vague claims that are the stock in trade of Papuan independence supporters. These include accusations of genocide, gross human rights violations and massive environmental destruction purportedly committed by Indonesians. When pressed to provide more specific information, however, Makabory and other WPNCL officials offered nothing new.

16. (C) Makabory told poloff that a Finnish organization had agreed to mediate negotiations between the WPNCL and the Indonesian government, although she declined to provide details. Finnish Embassy Second Secretary Riitta Gerlander told poloff that neither the Finnish government nor any Finnish organizations had agreed to mediate any such negotiations. She dismissed the claim as a "rumor" and thought it unlikely that any Finnish organization would become involved with the WPNCL.

17. (C) So far, WPNCL activities have been confined to writing letters to world leaders and issuing public statements. Makabory told poloff that WPNCL General Secretary John Otto Ondowame had written to President

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Yudhoyono in late December but had not received a reply. Ondowame reportedly plans to send letters to Western leaders, including President Bush, and to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon. The group has also issued a number of public

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statements, largely through the internet sites of various activist groups.

GOING NOWHERE?

18. (C) Most long-time Papua observers think the WPNCL has no chance of engaging the GOI in negotiations. Papua Forum Chairman Albert Hasibuan told poloff that Jakarta officials would reject any interaction with an overtly pro-independence group like the WPNCL.

19. (C) In addition--and in what appears to be a continuing phenomenon--many activists and officials in Papua reject the exiles' approach. Ronald Tapilatu, an advisor to Papua Governor Barnabas Suebu, told poloff that the WPNCL approach was "counter-productive": it would only confirm the view held by some central government officials that "all Papuans are separatists." This perception would only strengthen the hand of those in the GOI who favored a strong-handed "security approach" in Papua, he said. It would also undercut the efforts of both national and provincial leaders to implement Papua's Special Autonomy agreement with Jakarta.

110. (C) Budi Hernawan, Director of the Jayapura Diocese Peace and Justice Secretariat (SKP), agreed with this assessment, and told poloff that the WPNCL's activities could hamper the work of human rights advocates in the province. WPNCL public statements combined claims about alleged human rights violations in Papua with demands for political independence. This, according to Hernawan, made it more difficult for human rights defenders to convince Indonesian authorities that they were only concerned with human rights and did not have a position on Papua's political status. "We can only work if we are seen as above politics," he said.

NOT GOING AWAY

¶11. (C) The WPNCL seems to have succeeded in linking many key exile groups together. While the group probably will not get too far in working with the central government in Jakarta, it should not be dismissed altogether. Many Papuans follow what the exiles are saying on the internet and elsewhere, and their separatist-leaning views carry some weight in Papua. In discussions with the WPNCL representative, poloff underscored USG support for the territorial integrity of Indonesia, noting the need for full implementation of Special Autonomy.

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